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SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - JULY 17

11. (U) MOU SIGNED TO IMPROVE LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION EXCHANGE WITH U.S.:

Minister of Interior Tomislav Karamarko and Ambassador Robert Bradtke signed a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Croatia on Combating Crime on July 16. The MOU will allow for the formal exchange of criminal history information of citizens from both countries.

Law enforcement officials from both countries will now have an established method for exchanging information to combat serious crimes, including the exchange of arrest records and fugitive information, plus increased opportunities for training programs. (RGrech)

12. (U) MAIN OPPOSITION PARTIES UNITE, ANTICIPATING EARLY ELECTIONS:

On July 15, the leaders of the three largest opposition parties (Social Democratic Party (SDP), the Croatian Peoples, Party (HNS), and the Istrian Democratic Party (IDS)), agreed on a strategic deal to cooperate in the next parliamentary elections. Despite the fact that presidential elections are likely to occur before the opposition is able to orchestrate early parliamentary elections, the opposition parties emphasized to local media that taking control of the government would be their top priority, saying Croatia can no longer afford to suffer under its current poor leadership. SDP chief Zoran Milanovic said the parties would meet again soon to create an election platform and demonstrate their competence to assume responsibility for governing Croatia. The formation of this left-center block, which clearly features the SDP in the lead, is a boost to Milanovic, who previously has had difficulties working constructively with the HNS, particularly party chief Radimir Cacic. (DMeges)

13. (U) RAILWAY OFFICIALS ARRESTED FOR EMBEZZLEMENT:

A criminal investigation by the Office for Suppression of Organized Crime (USKOK) has led to the arrest of a former CEO of Croatian Railways, a former director of AGIT (a spinoff company of Croatian Railways), and AGIT's commercial director. Between 2003 and 2008, USKOK alleges the trio opened offshore bank accounts and transferred nearly 3 million euro from AGIT into the accounts as payments for spurious services. They were then apparently splitting the proceeds. The state prosecutors ordered detention for all three suspects and the criminal investigation is still ongoing. (VDjukic)

14. (U) CROATIAN VANDALS DAMAGE SLOVENE AND SERBIAN CARS AND CROATIA,S IMAGE:

In separate incidents this week, Croatian vandals slashed the tires of two cars on the island of Vis and one car,s tires on the island of Brac - all three cars bore Slovenian license plates. On Wednesday, July 15, Croatian youths in Dubrovnik significantly vandalized a car with Serbian license plates belonging to a vacationing Serb lawyer. Croatian police are still searching for the perpetrators in the island incidents, but have made three arrests in the Dubrovnik case. Local media have painted the incidents as setbacks to Croatia,s

efforts to attract more tourists from the former Yugoslav republics. (DMeges)

15. (U) NUMBER OF H1N1 CASES IN CROATIA NOW 18:

The Croatian Institute for Public Health has reported 8 new cases of H1N1 flu this week. This brings the total number of cases in Croatia to 18, three of which were human-to-human transmissions inside Croatia. All individuals affected are reportedly recovering well and the symptoms in most cases have been very mild, according to public health authorities. (DWestfall)

16. (U) PRESIDENT MESIC ATTENDS NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT SUMMIT:

President Mesic spoke on Thursday in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt at a summit for member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Croatia is attending the conference as an observer state. In his address, Mesic called for a "new world order" based on multilateralism and a stronger UN. He said that each country was entitled to "choose its own path" but that this did not mean negating universal values such as democracy and human rights. During the summit Mesic met with Cuban leader Raul Castro and both leaders expressed a desire to further develop bilateral and economic relations between the two countries. They also discussed the possibility of a visit from Mesic to Cuba in the fall. Since former Yugoslav president Josip Tito was one of the founding members of NAM, Mesic explained, it was logical Croatia would attend the summit as a Yugoslav successor state, as it has in the past.

(JNCallahan)

BRADTKE